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Message Text

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64
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 OPR-02 AGR-20 SCEM-02

INT-08 FAA-00 CAB-09 AID-20 PC-04 M-03 A-01 RSR-01

/177 W
---------- 111489
R 011640Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5066

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CI, ETRN, ECON
SUBJECT: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRUCKERS STRIKE

1. MOST VISIBLE EFFECT OF TRUCKERS STRIKE TO DATE IS LARGE NUMBER OF CLOSED GAS STATIONS AND LONG LINES OF CARS AT FEW STATIONS STILL OPEN. TRAFFIC ALREADY NOTICEABLY LIGHTER. ONLY THREE OUT OF NORMAL THIRTY-FIVE TRUCKS DELIVERING HOUSEHOLD FUELS IN SANTIAGO AREA. MANY HOMES (INCLUDING THOSE OF MISSION PERSONNEL) HAVE RUN OUT OF HEATING AND COOKING FUELS.

2. POTENTIALLY MOST SERIOUS ECONOMIC EFFECT OF STRIKE IS LOSS OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION FROM LACK OF FUEL FOR FACTORIES. LOCAL ESSO REP REPORTS FUEL DELIVERIES TO INDUSTRY RUNNING AT TEN TO FIFTEEN PERCENT OF NORMAL. BLOWING UP OF CONCON/MAIPU PIPELINE ON AUGUST 1 WILL CAUSE FURTHER INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS AS PIPELINE WAS SCHEDULED TO BE USED TO PUMP HEAVY INDUSTRIAL FUELS FROM CONCOM TO SANTIAGO. WE ASSUME FACTORIES ALSO FEELING PINCH ON SUPPLIES RAW MATERIALS, BUT IMPACT VARIES WIDELY AND IS DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY.

3. SAME SOURCE REPORTS ESSO SO FAR UNABLE TO SERVICE TOP PRIORITY
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CUSTOMERS OTHER THAN AIRPORTS, AIR FORCE, AND A FEW INDUSTRIES.

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GOVERNMENT AND COMPANY-OWNED TRUCKS WHICH ARE STILL RUNNING
COULD INCREASE PRESENT DELIVERIES BY AN ESTIMATED 30 PERCENT.
MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT ARMED GUARDS AND FOLLOW VEHICLES WHICH
MUST ACCOMPANY DELIVERY TRUCKS ARE SOMETIMES UNAVAILABLE. IN
ATTEMPT TO MAKE UP FOR SLOW DELIVERIES TO VITAL SECTORS, GOC
HAS ASKED INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES TO CUT FUELING AT SANTIAGO BY
50 PERCENT (AEROFLOT AND BUBANA REPORTEDLY EXEMPTED FROM CUTBACK).
LOCAL BRANIFF REP SAYS THAT CUTBACK WILL NOT RPT NOT FORCE ANY LINE
TO CANCEL FLIGHTS.

4. NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION SECRETARIAT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ADEQUATE
SUPPLIES OF ESSENTIAL FOODSTUFFS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION.
NEVERTHELESS, CENTRAL MARKET CLEARLY HAS LESS MEAT, FRUIT,
VEGETABLES THAN LAST WEEK.

5. COMMENT: EFFECTS OF THIS STRIKE, LIKE THAT OF LAST OCTOBER,
ARE CUMULATIVE. PROBABLY NOT TOO MUCH ECONOMIC DAMAGE BEEN
DONE SO FAR, BUT CONTINUATION STRIKE FOR ANOTHER WEEK WOULD HAVE
INCREASINGLY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES. GOC LEADERS HAVE SAID ON
MANY OCCASIONS SINCE LAST OCTOBER THAT THEY WILL NOT LET SUCH
SITUATION DEVELOP. AS IN PREVIOUS CASE, GOC IS SCHIZOPHRENIC
IN SIMULTANEOUSLY PROCLAIMING EVERYTHING IS NORMAL WHILE CHARGING
STRIKERS WITH SERIOUS DAMAGE TO ECONOMY.
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